

Bible Echo and Signs of the Times,
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Bible Echo

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1888

May 1888

“An Unwarranted Conclusion” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times 3, 5.

E. J. Waggoner

The *Congregationalist* a short time ago gave a brief notice of the Bible-class which was regularly held by Dr. Meredith, in Tremont Temple, Boston, noting especially the teaching of one of the International lessons. In this notice we find the following:-*BEST May 1888, page 66.1*

“In teaching this lesson, as well as one or two others lately, Dr. Meredith has expressed the opinion that we are not living in the last days of the world, but says he expects it to continue for centuries and ages, adducing as evidence of this the immense quantity of coal and minerals of various kinds stored up in the bowels of the earth apparently for the use of mankind.”*BEST May 1888, page 66.2*

It is astonishing that Bible students will call such statements as this “evidence” that we are not in the last days. While we would not call Dr. Meredith a scoffer, he certainly is in the line of the fulfillment of Peter’s prophecy that in the last days men shall say, “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 *Peter* 3:4), and thus himself furnishes evidence that we are in the last days.*BEST May 1888, page 66.3*

The argument, for such we will call it by courtesy, is this: Because there is an abundance of fuel in the earth, therefore it must be consumed. It would be just as reasonable to say that because a man has enough wheat in his barn to last him ten years therefore he must of necessity live until he has consumed it all. The Doctor forgets that sometimes those things which are designed for the use of man are made the instruments of his destruction.*BEST May 1888, page 66.4*

When the word was created it was a watery mass. Peter says it was “standing out of the water and in the water.” *2 Peter 3:5*. By the word of the Lord the waters were gathered together unto one place and the dry land appeared. Much of this water was stored in the bowels of the earth. It was doubtless there for man’s use, just as now we draw from the earth water to supply our needs. Now suppose we imagine Noah preaching that in a few years the Lord would destroy the earth. Up speaks some wise philosopher and says: “That cannot be, for there are vast quantities of water stored up in the earth for man’s use, and the earth cannot be destroyed until all that water has been consumed. But the water supply can never be exhausted, and therefore the world can never be destroyed.” No doubt he would have been applauded by the people for his wisdom. Nevertheless, “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” *2 Peter 3:6*. And the water which was stored within the earth, together with that which came from heaven, was the means by which the earth was destroyed.*BEST May 1888, page 66.5*

The apostle says that those who deny the Lord’s soon coming are willingly ignorant of the facts which we have just related. He says: “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” *2 Peter 3:7*. In this we cannot fail to see that the apostle draws a comparison between the future destruction of the earth by fire, and its former destruction by water. Just as the water out of which the earth was formed, and which was stored within the earth, caused its destruction, even so now the combustible material stored within the earth, will, together with the fire that comes down from God out of heaven, cause the earth to be dissolved.*BEST May 1888, page 66.6*

It is a very unsafe thing to draw conclusions from nature, contrary to the statements made in the Bible. It is true that God has abundant provision for the support of mankind on this earth for ages to come. But he has never pledged himself to support a people who are unworthy of support. When the people of the earth have forgotten him, or while professing to know him deny him by their works, he will count them as chaff fit only for the flames, and by the very things wherein they trust, he will destroy the world and them that

dwell therein, and will create a new heavens and a new earth,
wherein the righteous shall dwell.*BEST May 1888, page 66.7*

E. J. WAGGONER.

November 1888

“The Promise of His Coming,” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times 3, 11.

E. J. Waggoner

That there was once upon this earth a man called Jesus of Nazareth, scarcely anyone will now deny. Whatever conflicting views different ones may hold concerning his nature and office, all agree on this one fact. That he was taken, “and by wicked hands crucified and slain,” is quite generally conceded. All, however, are not aware that the admission of these facts is virtually an admission of the inspiration of the Bible, but so it is. Those very things, which no human wisdom could foresee, were recorded by holy prophets hundreds of years before they occurred. This fact shows that those prophets were inspired, or, as Peter declares, they “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” *2 Peter 1:21. BEST November 1888, page 170.1*

But this much being true, we must admit further that that which they wrote of the mission of Jesus was also true. Paul sums it up in brief when he says that “to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” *Acts 10:43*. Christ is, then, as all Christians agree, the “only begotten Son of God;” he is “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;” he is the divine Word that, having been with God in the beginning, was made flesh and dwelt upon the earth. *John 1*. The incidents of his life, his subjection to his parents, his baptism, his temptation in the wilderness, his wonderful teachings, his marvelous miracles showing at once his tenderness and his power, his betrayal and crucifixion, and finally his triumphant resurrection and ascension to heaven,—these are familiar to hundreds of thousands. *BEST November 1888, page 170.2*

Aside from his wonderful sacrifice, which demands the unending love of all creatures, the character of Jesus as a man was most lovable. His disciples who had been with him night and day for more than three years, had learned to love him devotedly, both for what he was and what he promised them. On him all their hopes centered. Their feelings were well expressed by Peter, who, when

they were asked if they would leave Jesus, said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." We can imagine, then, to some extent, their grief when Jesus said to them: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." *John 13:33*. It was the blasting of all their hopes; their hearts were filled with anguish. Jesus, whom they loved, was to go away, and even though they should lay down their lives for him, he would not take them along. *BEST November 1888, page 170.3*

But the compassionate Saviour would not leave his children in torturing suspense. Noticing their despondent looks, he said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." *John 14:1-3. BEST November 1888, page 170.4*

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me." What can these words mean, but that the words which he was about to utter were the words of God himself, true and unchangeable? Whatever this promise means, then, it will as surely be fulfilled as that God is a God of truth. We can rely upon it implicitly. *BEST November 1888, page 170.5*

And now as to the meaning of the promise. How could it be made more clear? The gist of it is contained in these simple words: "I will come again." He was here then, a real being. The word "again," meaning "once more," implies a repetition of the same thing. That is, that he would come in the same form in which he then was, - glorified, of course, as we shall see, - but a real, tangible being, - Jesus of Nazareth. There is a great deal contained in the three verses which we have quoted, but at present we are concerned only with the simple fact that Christ has pledged his word to come again. *BEST November 1888, page 170.6*

The time which Jesus spent on this earth, from his birth in Bethlehem until his ascension from the Mount of Olives, is known as the first advent, or coming of Christ. There is no question but that

he had been upon the earth many times before, but that was his first appearance in connection with the great plan of salvation. And so, although he has since been on earth continuously, by his representative, the Holy Spirit, his second coming must be limited to that one mentioned in the promise, "I will come *again*." This promise cannot be fulfilled by anything except by his personal presence in glory. It will be his second coming in connection with the great plan of salvation-this time to complete the work by taking his people to himself.*BEST November 1888, page 170.7*

That we are not mistaken in saying that Christ in comforting his disciples, gave promise of a second coming, is proved by the words of Paul, in *Hebrews 9:27, 28*: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." This places the matter beyond dispute.*BEST November 1888, page 170.8*

This text also settles another much mooted question, that of a future probation. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment." How long after death the Judgment takes place must be determined by other texts. The general truth is stated that men die but once, and that after that their future fate is determined by the Judgment. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." That is, since men have but one life,-one probation,-which ends with their death, so Christ was only once offered. His offering had reference only to men in this present life. If man was to have two or more probations, then it would be necessary for two or more offerings to be made in his behalf; but there was only one offering. At his advent, Christ was offered "to bear the sins of many." The Lord "laid on him the iniquity of us all." *Isaiah 53:6*. "In his own body" he bore our sins on the tree. *1 Peter 2:24*. In order to save us from sin, he was made to be sin (*2 Corinthians 5:21*); the innocent One was counted as guilty in order that the guilty might be accounted innocent. The benefits of this sacrifice are now free to all who will accept it, while Jesus is pleading its merits before the Father. But when he comes "the second time," he will be "without sin;" he will then no longer act as substitute for sinners; no longer will he assume any responsibility in their behalf. The sins of the righteous will have been blotted out, and those of the impenitent

rolled back upon their own heads. There can then be no more probation for them unless Christ should again take upon himself their sins and make another sacrifice; for there is no salvation in any other. *Acts 4:12*. And since Christ makes but one offering, it follows that their sins remain upon them, to sink them into perdition.*BEST November 1888, page 170.9*

In the texts already quoted, there is sufficient proof that the promised coming is not at the death of the saints, neither the conversion of sinners. He appears “to them that look for him;” to those who “love his appearing.” And this coming is not death, for it is only the “second” coming; if death were that coming, then there would be many millions of comings, for not an instant of time passes in which men do not die. He said that he would come “again;” now we submit that this can with no propriety be applied to death, unless his first coming was death, and they were all dead when he was speaking for “again” signifies repetition.*BEST November 1888, page 170.10*

But we have an inspired comment on this point in the last chapter of John. Christ had just signified to Peter by what death he should glorify God, when that disciple, turning about, saw John following, and asked, “What shall this man do?” “Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.” *Verse 22*. Now if the coming of Christ is at the death of his saints, these words of Christ are equivalent to this: “If I will that he live until he dies, what is that to thee?” But such a substitution makes utter nonsense of the passage. Then when Christ spoke of his coming, he had no reference whatever to death. This will be still more evident as we consider texts that describe the manner of his coming.*BEST November 1888, page 170.11*

December 1888

“Thine Is the Glory,” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times 3, 12.

E. J. Waggoner

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” *Ephesians 3:14-19*. *BEST December 1888, page 185.1*

A finer passage cannot be found in any book in the world. It would seem as though Inspiration itself could not use human language to furnish a more magnificent climax. Paul prays for the same thing that we ought to pray for, namely, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and that so we may be filled with all the fullness of God; and this is nothing less than that we should be able to resist all evil, and to keep it out of our hearts. But how can we do this, seeing we are weak? Why, God will strengthen us with might by his Spirit. But how much might will he give us by his Spirit? “According to the riches of his glory.” And so when the Christian approaches the throne of grace, that he may find grace to help in time of need, he may remember that all power and glory belong to God; and the thought that his draft upon the supply of strengthening grace will be honored to an amount equal to the inconceivable glory of God, must necessarily tend to make him come with boldness. *BEST December 1888, page 185.2*

The same thought is emphasized in a most wonderful manner by the prophet Jeremiah in his prayer to God for the backslidden Jews. He says: “We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers; for we have sinned against thee. Do not abhor us, for thy name’s sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us.” *Jeremiah 14:20, 21*. *BEST*

December 1888, page 185.3

Surely the prophet must have been filled with the Spirit when he uttered that prayer, else he would not have dared say to the Lord, "Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory." What may we learn from it? Simply this: God's throne is a throne of grace; it is also a throne of glory, and he has promised to give grace "according to the riches of his glory." Therefore if he should fail to impart this full measure of grace to those to whom it is promised, his glorious throne would cease to be a throne of glory; it would be disgraced. What confidence we may have when we remember that God's honor and glory are pledged to the support of those who trust him. What excuse can we have for not overcoming? "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." *Psalm 84:11.BEST*

December 1888, page 185.4

"The Lord will give grace and glory." Grace now and glory hereafter. Yet the measure of grace which he will give is according to the riches of his glory, so that, believing in and loving Christ, when we have not seen, we may "rejoice with joy unspeakable and *full of glory*." *1 Peter 1:8*. And so with Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, being children of God, "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (*Ephesians 1:6*), the trying of our faith will certainly "be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." *1 Peter 1:7.BEST*

December 1888, page 185.5

